

What is claimed is:

1. A method for facilitating a transaction between a buyer and one seller, the method comprising the steps of:
 - receiving an offer which specifies
 - a type of product,
 - at least one condition, and
 - an offer price specified by a buyer;
 - receiving a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier being associated with the offer;
 - making the offer available to one seller after receiving the payment identifier;
 - receiving an acceptance from the one seller, the acceptance being responsive to the offer; and
 - providing a payment to the one seller by using the payment identifier upon receiving the acceptance.
2. The method of claim 1, in which the step of providing a payment to the one seller comprises:
 - providing a payment that is based on the offer price.
3. The method of claim 1, in which the step of providing a payment to the one seller comprises:
 - providing a payment that is based a penalty payment amount if the buyer indicates withdrawal of the offer after the step of receiving an acceptance.

1 4. The method of claim 1, in which the offer price defines at least two forms of currency.

1 5. The method of claim 4, in which the offer price defines:

2 a first amount of first form of currency, and

3 a second amount of second form of currency.

1 6. The method of claim 4, in which at least one form of currency is frequent flyer miles.

1 7. The method of claim 4, in which the payment identifier specifies:

2 a first financial account for paying a first form of currency, and

3 a second financial account for paying a second form of currency.

1 8. The method of claim 7, in which the first financial account is the second financial
2 account.

1 9. The method of claim 7, in which the step of providing payment comprises:
2 debiting the first financial account and debiting the second financial account.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 selecting the one seller from a plurality of sellers based on the type of product.

1 11. The method of claim 1, in which the financial account is a credit card account.

1 12. A method for facilitating a transaction between a buyer and one seller, the method
2 comprising the steps of:

3 receiving an offer which specifies
4 a type of product,
5 at least one condition, and
6 an offer price specified by a buyer;
7 receiving a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier
8 being associated with the offer;
9 determining whether to accept the offer; and
10 receiving payment by using the payment identifier upon determining to accept the
11 offer.

1 13. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 randomly determining whether to accept the offer without considering the offer price.

1 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
2 determining whether to accept the offer based on product availability after the step of
3 randomly determining to accept the offer without considering the offer price.

1 15. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
2 generating a random number; and
3 determining, if the random number is within a predetermined range, whether to accept
4 the offer based on product availability without considering the offer price.

1 16. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

2 creating a counter offer upon determining to reject the offer, the counter offer
3 specifying
4 the type of product, and
5 a counter offer price; and
6 transmitting the counter offer to the buyer.

1 17. The method of claim 16, in which the counter offer price is based on the offer price.

1 18. The method of claim 17, in which the counter offer price is less than the offer price.

1 19. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
2 determining a plurality of products that satisfy the at least one condition.

1 20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:
2 transmitting an indication of the plurality of products to the buyer.

1 21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:
2 receiving from the buyer a selection of one of the plurality of products.

1 22. The method of claim 19, further comprising:
2 selecting a product from the plurality of products to fulfill the offer.

1 23. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a product based on expected profit from the product.

1 24. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 selecting a product based on availability of the product.

1 25. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 selecting a product based on a comparison of predicted sales of the product and actual
3 sales of the product.

1 26. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 selecting a product based on whether actual sales of the product are less than
3 predicted sales of the product.

1 27. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 determining, for each product, an amount by which actual sales of the product are less
3 than predicted sales of the product; and

4 selecting a product that has a maximal amount by which actual sales of the product
5 are less than predicted sales of the product.

1 28. The method of claim 22, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining whether sales of a first set of products are less than sales of a second set
4 of products; and

5 selecting a product from the first set of products if sales of the first set are less than
6 sales of the second set.

1 29. The method of claim 28, in which each product of the plurality of products is
2 allocated for fulfilling offers.

1 30. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on an availability of a product.

1 31. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on a comparison of predicted sales of a
4 product and actual sales of the product.

1 32. The method of claim 31, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on whether actual sales of the product
4 are less than predicted sales of the product.

1 33. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for a product; and
4 accepting the offer if the offer price is greater than the minimum price.

1 34. The method of claim 33, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for the product based on an availability of the product.

35. The method of claim 33, in which the step of determining a minimum price comprises:
determining a minimum price for the product based on a comparison of predicted sales of the product and actual sales of the product.

36. The method of claim 33, in which the step of determining a minimum price comprises:
determining a minimum price for the product based on whether actual sales of the product are less than predicted sales of the product.

37. The method of claim 12, in which the financial account is a credit card account.

38. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer comprises:
delaying acceptance until a predetermined time.

39. A method for facilitating a transaction between a buyer and one seller of airline carriage, the method comprising the steps of:
receiving an offer which specifies
an origination,
a destination, and
an offer price specified by a buyer;
receiving a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier being associated with the offer;
determining whether to accept the offer; and

10 receiving payment by using the payment identifier upon determining to accept the
11 offer.

1 40. The method of claim 39, further comprising:
2 determining a plurality of flights that specify both the origination and the destination.

1 41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
2 transmitting an indication of the plurality of flights to the buyer.

1 42. The method of claim 41, further comprising:
2 receiving from the buyer a selection of one of the plurality of flights.

1 43. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
2 selecting a flight from the plurality of flights to fulfill the offer.

1 44. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on expected profit from the product.

1 45. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on availability of the seats on the flight.

1 46. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on a comparison of predicted sales of seats on the flight and
3 actual sales of the seats on the flight.

1 47. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on whether actual sales of seats on the flight are less than
3 predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 48. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 determining, for each flight, an amount by which actual sales of seats on the flight are
3 less than predicted sales of seats on the flight; and
4 selecting a flight that has a maximal amount by which actual sales of seats on the
5 flight are less than predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 49. The method of claim 43, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether sales of seats on a first flight are less than sales of seats on a
4 second flight; and
5 selecting a seat from the first flight if sales of seats on the first flight are less than
6 sales of seats on the second flight.

1 50. The method of claim 49, in which each seat of a plurality of seats is allocated for
2 fulfilling offers.

1 51. The method of claim 39, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on an availability of seats on a flight.

1 52. The method of claim 39, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining whether to accept the offer based on a comparison of predicted sales of
4 seats on a flight and actual sales of seats on the flight.

1 53. The method of claim 52, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining whether to accept the offer based on whether actual sales of seats on the
4 flight are less than predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 54. The method of claim 39, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining a minimum price for a seat on a flight; and

4 accepting the offer if the offer price is greater than the minimum price.

1 55. The method of claim 54, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:

3 determining a minimum price for the seat based on an availability of seats on the
4 flight.

1 56. The method of claim 54, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:

3 determining a minimum price for the seat based on a comparison of predicted sales of
4 seats on the flight and actual sales of seats on the flight.

1 57. The method of claim 54, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for the seat based on whether actual sales of seats on
4 the flight are less than predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 58. A method for assessing demand for a product, comprising:
2 receiving a plurality of offers, each offer specifying
3 a type of product,
4 at least one condition, and
5 an offer price specified by a buyer;
6 each offer further being associated with a payment identifier that specifies a financial
7 account for rendering payment upon acceptance of the offer; and
8 storing data from the plurality of offers.

1 59. The method of claim 58, further comprising:
2 adjusting a price of a product based on the offer price of at least one offer.

1 60. The method of claim 59, in which the step of adjusting comprises:
2 selecting a subset of offers, the product satisfying each condition of each offer of the
3 subset of offers; and
4 adjusting a price of the product based on the offer price of each offer of the subset of
5 offers.

1 61. The method of claim 60, in which the step of selecting a subset of offers further
2 comprises:

3 selecting a subset of offers that were accepted.

1 62. The method of claim 59, in which the price is a retail price of the product.

1 63. The method of claim 58, further comprising:

2 adjusting a future supply of a product based on the offer price of at least one offer.

1 64. The method of claim 63, in which the step of adjusting comprises:

2 selecting a subset of offers, the product satisfying each condition of each offer of the

3 subset of offers; and

4 adjusting a future supply of the product based on the offer price of each offer of the

5 subset of offers.

1 65. The method of claim 64, in which the step of selecting a subset of offers further
2 comprises:

3 selecting a subset of offers that were accepted.

1 66. A computer-readable storage medium storing a database of offers created in

2 accordance with the method of claim 12.

1 67. A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising:

2 an offer which specifies

3 a type of product,

4 at least one condition, and

5 an offer price specified by a buyer; and

- 6 a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier being
- 7 associated with the offer.

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